



# DAFINET Post-Doc

Social Psychology, Social Identity, and Opinion Dynamics

Dr Cillian McHugh

3 December 2020

# Overview

How my background, skills, and experience can be applied to the DAFINET project, especially using experiments

Cillian McHugh - 3/12/21



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## Background, Skills, and Experience

- Theoretical Contribution
- Empirical and Experimental Skills
- Other Skills and Relevant Experience



# Theoretical influences

- Ecological Psychology/  
Ecobehavioural Science
- Dynamical Systems
- Enactivism
- Embodiment
- Categorization
- Dual-Processes
- Mental Models



# Continued Commitment to Robust Theory

Being Where

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Being Where:  
Revisiting Behavior Setting Theory

Roskilde: 25th & 26th April 2022



Revisiting Behavior Setting Theory

On the 25th and 26th of April 2022, Roskilde University, will host a Symposium on the work of Roger Barker.

(Part funded by [Carlsbergfondet](#))

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# Moral Judgment as Categorization (MJAC)

## Premises

- Moral judgment is a process of **categorizing** as *MORALLY RIGHT / MORALLY WRONG*
- Domain general
- Context sensitive & Dynamical, Goal-Directed Activity

## Core Predictions

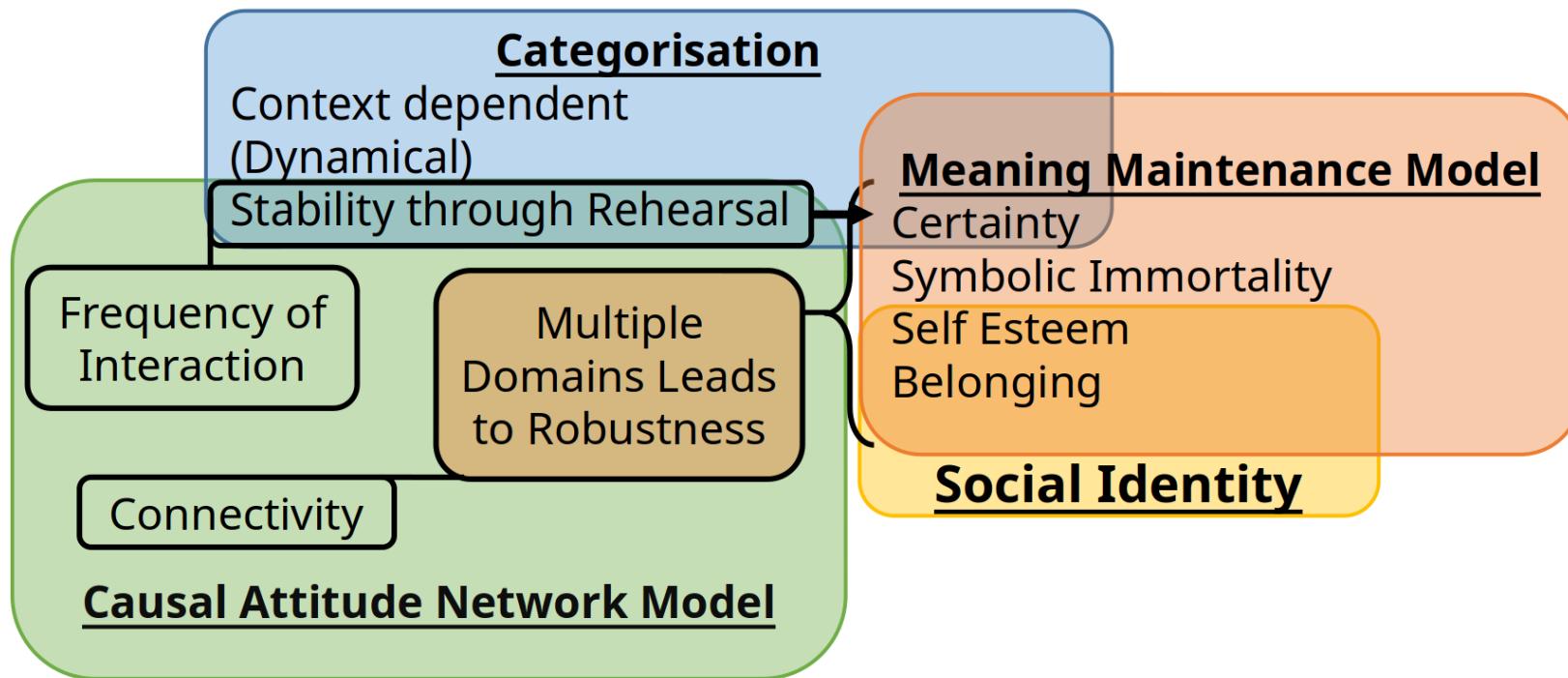
- *Stability* emerges through continued and consistent type-token interpretation
- *Robustness* emerges through consistency across multiple contexts

(accepted at *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, Q1, IF = 9.84)

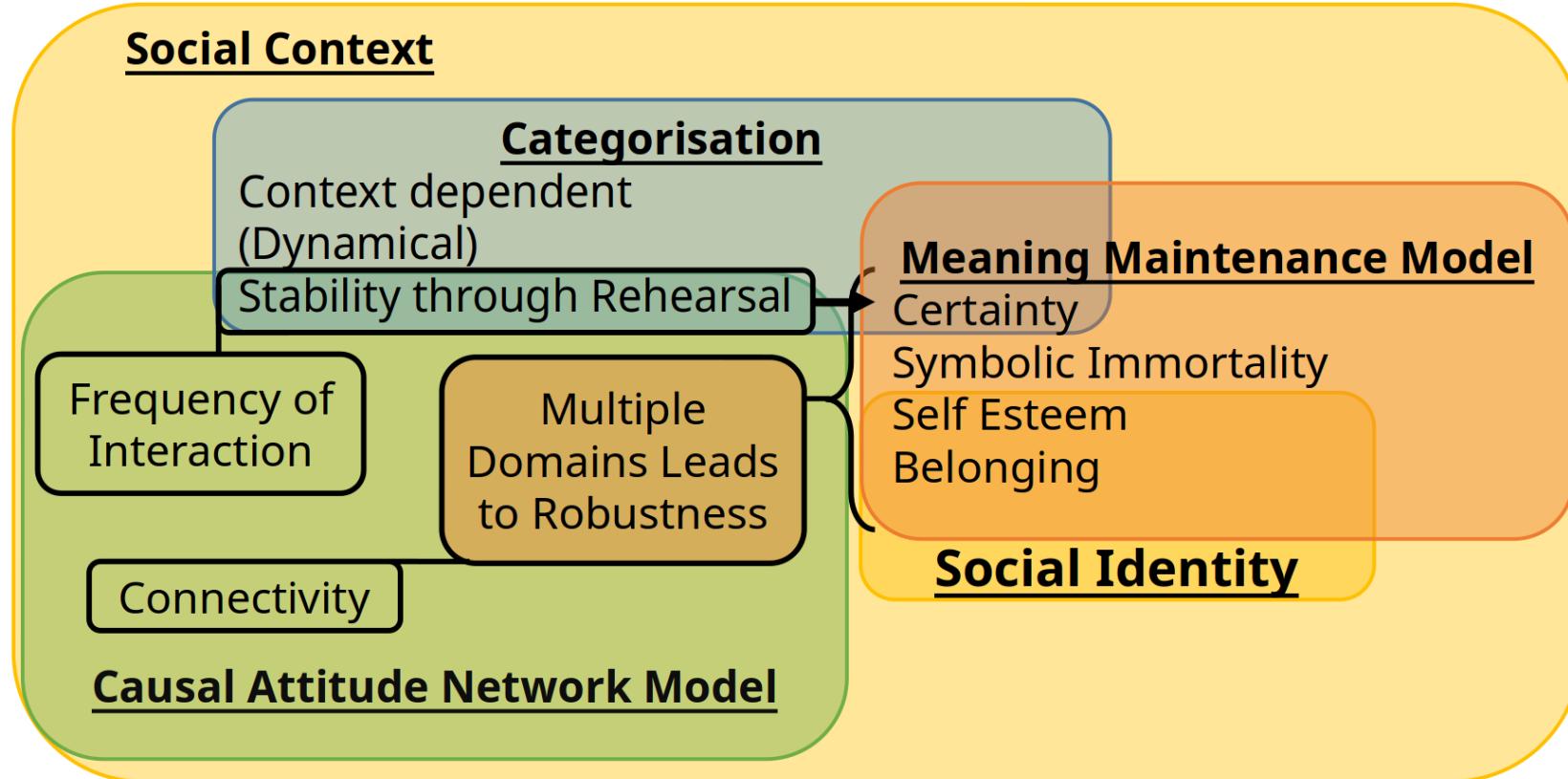
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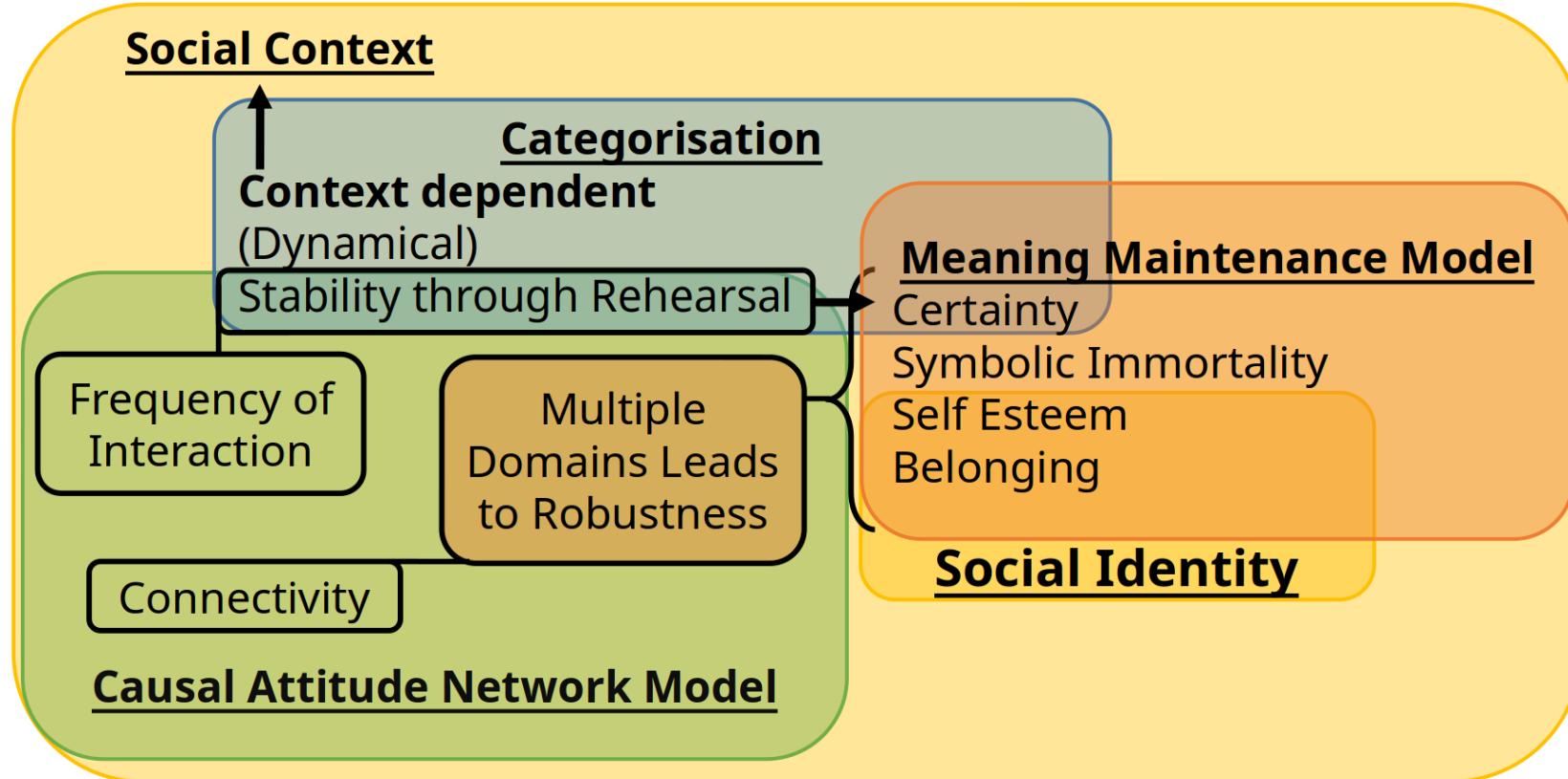
# Overlap Between MJAC and DAFINET



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# Overlap Between MJAC and DAFINET



# Empirical Work



McHugh, C., et al. (2017). Searching for Moral Dumbfounding: Identifying Measurable Indicators of Moral Dumbfounding. *Collabra: Psychology*, 3(1), 23, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1525/collabra.79>

## ORIGINAL RESEARCH REPORT

### Searching for Moral Dumbfounding: Identifying Measurable Indicators of Moral Dumbfounding

Cillian McHugh\*, Marek McGann\*, Eric R. Igou<sup>1</sup> and Elaine L. Kinsella<sup>1</sup>

Moral dumbfounding is defined as maintaining a moral judgement, without supporting reasons. The most cited demonstration of dumbfounding does not identify a specific measure of dumbfounding and has not been published in peer-review form, or directly replicated. Despite limited empirical examination, dumbfounding has been widely discussed in moral psychology. The present research examines the reliability with which dumbfounding can be elicited, and aims to identify measurable indicators of dumbfounding. Study 1 aimed at establishing the effect that is reported in the literature. Participants read four scenarios and judged the actions described. An Interviewer challenged participants' stated reasons for judgements. Dumbfounding was evoked, as measured by two indicators, admissions of not having reasons (17%), unsupported declarations (9%) with differences between scenarios. Study 2 measured dumbfounding as the selecting of an unsupported declaration as part of a computerised task. We observed high rates of dumbfounding across all scenarios. Studies 3a (college sample) and 3b (MTurk sample), addressing limitations in Study 2, replaced the unsupported declaration with an admission of having no reason, and included open-ended responses that were coded for unsupported declarations. As predicted, lower rates of dumbfounding were observed (3a 20%; 3b 16%; or 3a 32%; 3b 24% including unsupported declarations in open-ended responses). Two measures provided evidence for dumbfounding across three studies; rates varied with task type (interview/computer task), and with the particular measure being employed (admissions of not having reasons/unsupported declarations). Possible cognitive processes underlying dumbfounding and limitations of methodologies used are discussed as a means to account for this variability.

**Keywords:** Morality; Dumbfounding; Judgement; Intuitions; Reasoning

Received: 16 May 2019 | Revised: 29 November 2019 | Accepted: 29 November 2019  
DOI: 10.1002/bdm.2167

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

WILEY

### Reasons or rationalizations: The role of principles in the moral dumbfounding paradigm

Cillian McHugh<sup>1</sup> | Marek McGann<sup>2</sup> | Eric R. Igou<sup>1</sup> | Elaine L. Kinsella<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Psychology, University of Limerick, Limerick, Ireland

<sup>2</sup>Department of Psychology, Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick, Limerick, Ireland

**Correspondence**  
Cillian McHugh, Department of Psychology,  
University of Limerick, Limerick, V94 T9PX,  
Ireland.  
Email: cillian.mchugh@ul.ie

#### Abstract

Moral dumbfounding occurs when people maintain a moral judgment even though they cannot provide reasons for it. Recently, questions have been raised about whether dumbfounding is a real phenomenon. Two reasons have been proposed as guiding the judgments of dumbfounded participants: harm-based reasons (believing an action may cause harm) or norm-based reasons (breaking a moral norm is inherently wrong). Participants in that research (see Royzman, Kim, & Leeman, 2015), who endorsed either reason were excluded from analysis, and instances of moral dumbfounding seemingly reduced to non-significance. We argue that endorsing a reason is not sufficient evidence that a judgment is grounded in that reason. Stronger evidence should additionally account for (a) articulating a given reason and (b) consistently applying the reason in different situations. Building on this, we develop revised exclusion criteria across three studies. Study 1 included an open-ended response option immediately after the presentation of a moral scenario. Responses were coded for mention of harm-based or norm-based reasons. Participants were excluded from analysis if they both articulated and endorsed a given reason. Using these revised criteria for exclusion, we found evidence for dumbfounding, as measured by the selecting of an admission of not having reasons. Studies 2 and 3 included a further three questions relating to harm-based reasons specifically, assessing the consistency with which people apply harm-based reasons across differing contexts. As predicted, few participants consistently applied, articulated, and endorsed harm-based reasons, and evidence for dumbfounding was found.

**KEY WORDS**  
dumbfounding, intuition, morality, moral judgment, rationalism, reasons

## (Robustness / Attitude Fixing)

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# Empirical Work - Practical Skills

- Experimental Methods:
- Software
  - jsPsych, BORIS, Observer, OpenSesame, SuperLab, (Qualtrics)
- Programming
  - R, Shiny, Markdown
  - Python (matplotlib), HTML, Bash, L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X, JavaScript
- Taught Game theory (in class game interactions)



jsPsych is a JavaScript framework for creating behavioral experiments that run in a web browser.

Experiments in jsPsych are created using [plugins](#). Each plugin defines different kinds of events, like showing an image on the screen, and collects different kinds of data, like recording which key was pressed at which time. You can use the plugins that are [included with jsPsych](#), use plugins that are developed by community members in the [contrib repository](#), or [create your own plugins](#). By assembling different plugins together into a [timeline](#), it is possible to create a wide range of experiments.

The [page on timelines](#) is a good place to start learning about jsPsych. From there, you might want to complete the [hello world tutorial](#) to learn how to set up a jsPsych experiment and the [reaction time experiment tutorial](#) to learn the core features of the framework.

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UNIVERSITÀ  
DEGLI STUDI  
DI TORINO

BLACK  
LIVES  
MATTER

## Behavioral Observation Research Interactive Software

BORIS is an easy-to-use event logging software for video/audio coding and live observations.  
BORIS is a free and open-source software available for GNU/Linux, Windows and Mac OS X.

Please acknowledge and cite the use of this software and its authors when results are used in publications or published elsewhere:

DOI: 10.1111/2041-210X.12584



### User testimonials

### News

#### 2021-09-20: v. 7.12.2 is available

Experimental v. 7.12.2 is available. The coding Pad was improved: color mode (by behaviors or behavioral categories), buttons color and font size can be customized.

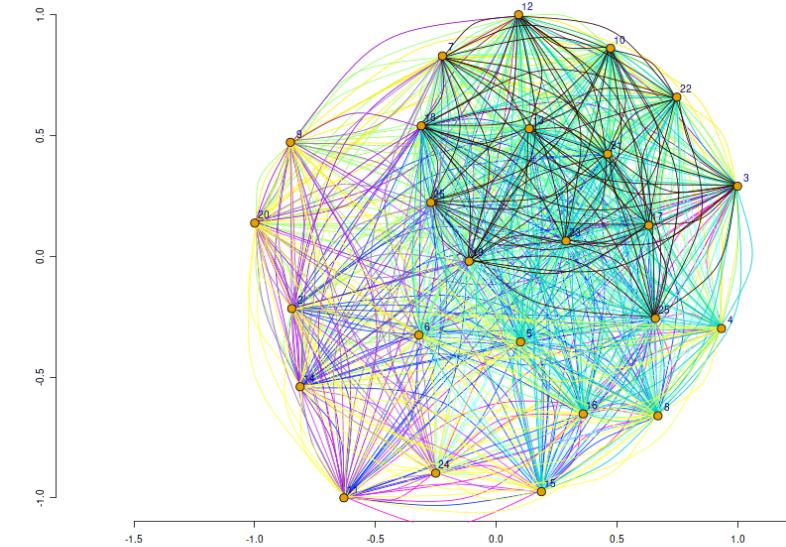
[Link](#)

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## #MeToo Tweets

From Participant number:  
1

To Participant number:  
10000

Select Columns

Author  
 ID  
 Tweet Content  
 Metrics  
 Created  
 date

Show 10 entries		Search:
Tweet Content		
8125	- Allô Matthieu ? - Oui Yannick ? - [...] Tu ne seras pas une #PopStar. #EELV #NicolasHulot #VRPGelDouche #MeToo #NousToutes #BalanceTonPorc #BalanceTonMinistre <a href="https://t.co/FZevSiqmDo">https://t.co/FZevSiqmDo</a>	
4713	: 【パリ発コラム】「燃ゆる女の肖像」アデル・エネル、「#MeToo」告発本で過去の被害、ボランスキーハへの批判を語る <a href="https://t.co/POitxZ7KK">https://t.co/POitxZ7KK</a>	
5724	: Efecto Rock Hoy está disponible! <a href="https://t.co/5aJ6O3SFDC">https://t.co/5aJ6O3SFDC</a> Siempre Efecto Rock @Infovaticana @WolffWaldo #enmiblog #metoo	
9946	: El último LA VERDAD ON LINE! <a href="https://t.co/Fc7uJ6d2Me">https://t.co/Fc7uJ6d2Me</a> #metoo	
5375	: El último LA VERDAD ON LINE! <a href="https://t.co/SFLurBFNIV">https://t.co/SFLurBFNIV</a> #metoo	
3219	. ❤ JA, for vi har ALLE ( stort set alle kvinder og nogle få mænd ) været UDSAT FOR mere eller mindre DET SAMME❤️❤️!! . #MeToo #dkpol #gestillingNU #RiosfraSEXCHIKANE @regeringDK @Enhedslisten @SFpolitik @radikale <a href="https://t.co/f5eNwbC1eQ">https://t.co/f5eNwbC1eQ</a>	
4912	... elephant in the room re #metoo movement and indigenous women's rights - class 😊 #thedrum	
9332	... military's inability to care for the women who have experienced sexual assault. Furthermore, the #MeToo movement has driven women to provide evidence of their assaults to an inquiry by the defense committee. #mchslang23	
8840	... wird den schriftlich niedergelegten Werten des IOC in keiner Weise gerecht und sendet völlig falsche Signale. Der Vorwurf wird nicht ernst genommen." - Prof. Ilse Hartmann-Tews 2/2 #PengShuai #ioc #beijing2022 #china #MeToo <a href="https://t.co/rwMn8ppAA1">https://t.co/rwMn8ppAA1</a>	
7102	...Cari radicalchic, cari buonisti, cari personaggi dei #social, cari influencer de stocca., cari indignados da #hashtag #nonunadimeno, cari #metoo, benvenuti nel MONDO REALE.. #GretaBeccaglia <a href="https://t.co/a78qbZXMrK">https://t.co/a78qbZXMrK</a>	

Showing 1 to 10 of 10,000 entries

Previous 1 2 3 4 5 ... 1,000 Next

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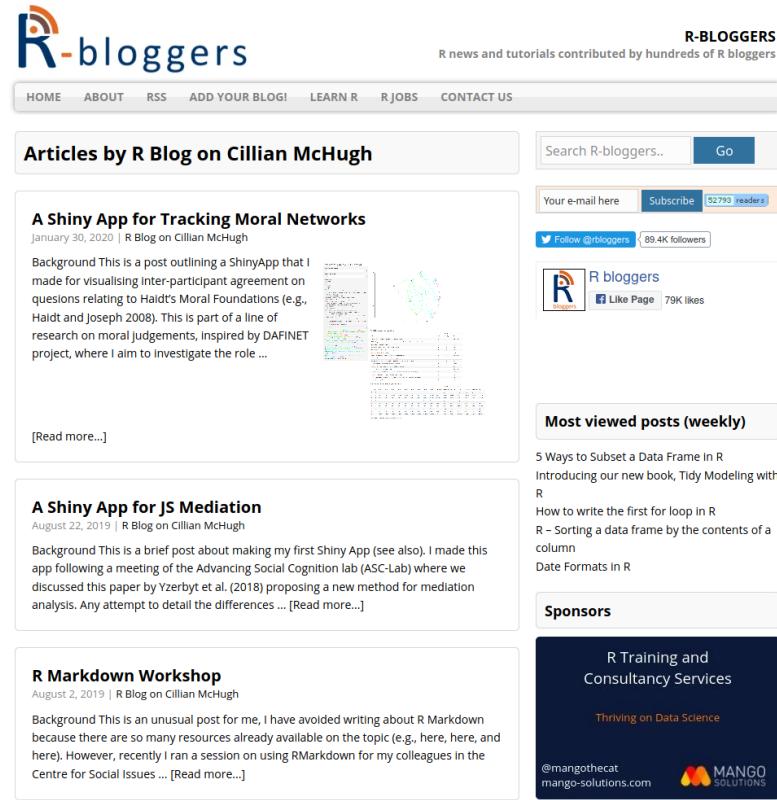
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5 Ways to Subset a Data Frame in R  
Introducing our new book, Tidy Modeling with R  
How to write the first for loop in R  
R – Sorting a data frame by the contents of a column  
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VIAPPL is a software platform that allows researchers to conduct experiments in social interaction. Since social interaction is the foundation of social life this platform allows researchers to test a wide range of social and psychological hypothesis.

Recent developments in social psychology have highlighted the strategic nature of social action, that social identities and norms emerge in interaction, and the need for dynamic explanations of the conservation and change of social structures and outcomes. VIAPPL is an experimental technology for conducting such research.

VIAPPL allows researchers to observe the evolution of social structures (such as norms, networks and identities), interaction patterns, and social outcomes like exclusion, inequality and ingroup favoritism.

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# Other Relevant Skills and Experience

# Commitment to Open Science

- Open Data
- Open Code
- Open Materials
- Open data simulation
- Open Access publication
- Open Peer Review
- Pre-registration
  - Registered Reports
- Workshops and Talks
- Transparency and Openness Promotion



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Member Since

2017-07-20

Public Profile

[osf.io/cxyhp](https://osf.io/cxyhp)

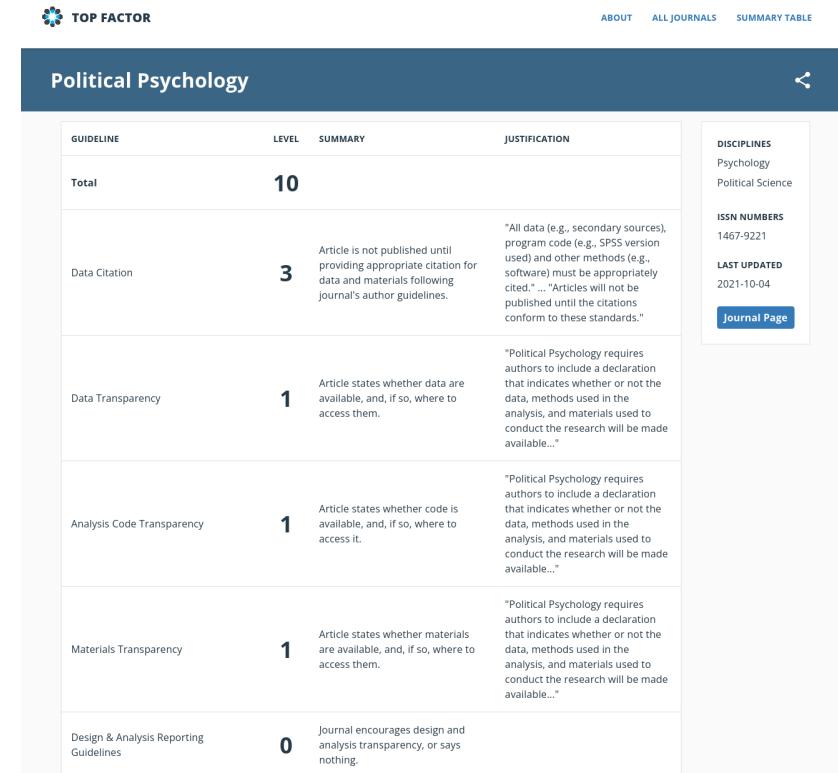
1374 activity points  
17 projects, 10 public

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- Open Materials
- Open data simulation
- Open Access publication
- Open Peer Review
- Pre-registration
  - Registered Reports
- Workshops and Talks
- Transparency and Openness Promotion



The screenshot shows a journal analysis report for "Political Psychology" from the TOP FACTOR platform. The report includes a header with the journal name, a navigation bar with links to About, All Journals, and Summary Table, and a sidebar with discipline and ISSN information. The main content is a table with columns for Guideline, Level, Summary, and Justification.

GUIDELINE	LEVEL	SUMMARY	JUSTIFICATION
Total	<b>10</b>		
Data Citation	<b>3</b>	Article is not published until providing appropriate citation for data and materials following journal's author guidelines.	"All data (e.g., secondary sources), program code (e.g., SPSS version used) and other methods (e.g., software) must be appropriately cited." ... "Articles will not be published until the citations conform to these standards."
Data Transparency	<b>1</b>	Article states whether data are available, and, if so, where to access them.	"Political Psychology requires authors to include a declaration that indicates whether or not the data, methods used in the analysis, and materials used to conduct the research will be made available..."
Analysis Code Transparency	<b>1</b>	Article states whether code is available, and, if so, where to access it.	"Political Psychology requires authors to include a declaration that indicates whether or not the data, methods used in the analysis, and materials used to conduct the research will be made available..."
Materials Transparency	<b>1</b>	Article states whether materials are available, and, if so, where to access them.	"Political Psychology requires authors to include a declaration that indicates whether or not the data, methods used in the analysis, and materials used to conduct the research will be made available..."
Design & Analysis Reporting Guidelines	<b>0</b>	Journal encourages design and analysis transparency, or says nothing.	

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# International Collaborations and Reach

- Cross-cultural examination of Moral Dumbfounding  
Nishtha Lamba & Olga Khokhlova (Middlesex University Dubai)
- The Moral Psychology of #MeToo: A psychological approach to understanding the campaigns to reduce sexual harassment assault  
Ana Gantman (Brooklyn College, CUNY) & Orla Muldoon (UL)
- Influences on the evaluations of Doctors in Residency  
Andrea Gingerich (University of Northern British Columbia)
- A Replication and Extension of Railton (2017) in *Cognition*  
Kathryn B. Fancis (Keele University), Jim A. C. Everett (University of Kent), Shane Timmons (ESRI)
- Invited talks at International Moral Psychology Seminar Series, Baylor University Texas, Dubai, Brooklyn College New York.

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# Conclusion

- Demonstrated capacity for theory development
- Development of new methods  
(A range of approaches & platforms)
- Expertise and experience in a range of coding/programming languages
- Collaboration and Teamwork

## Fit and Contribution

- Overlapping basic research questions
- Different perspectives (cognitive / social)
- Shared basic assumptions / theoretical traditions



Thank you For Listening